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from Wreck Bay, which is more sheltered and has a better beach than the other anchorages.

The French brig-of-war 'La Genie,' in August last, dug a well through clay, the lava being only superficial, but it was too near the beach, and the water in it, and in the ponds described by Captain Kellet, I found to be quite salt.

Having examined Post-Office Bay, in Charles Island, we next anchored in Black Beach Road, whence there is a path to the settlement, at which there is a well about a mile and a half from the sea, and five miles farther the spring called the Deepstone, beyond the cultivated land so well described by Captain Fitzroy, which I visited with Captain Henderson.

The number of settlers is now reduced to about twenty-five, as the greater number have left the island, their chief occupation of supplying the whaling-ships having ceased with the exhaustion of terrapin in this island. On the lately cultivated farms every kind of tropical production* was growing in abundance; and the adjoining lands, which had not been cleared, appeared to be of the same character, and to be available for increased means of subsistence if the island were peopled.

It is stated in an account of a voyage in an English whaling-ship, published by Dr. Coulter, that he found coal in the hills in the interior of Chatham Island. The residents, who have gone over it, are not aware of its existence; but the assertion furnishes an additional reason for a thorough examination of the island.

Volcanic action in this group of islands is so generally marked, and there is so much lava on the shores, that the first appearance is discouraging; but the result of my short personal examination has been to give me a better idea of their resources, if in the hands of those who would apply industry and exertion to their improvement.

The climate is healthy and the heat moderate, considering the vicinity of the islands to the equator.

V.—*Observations on Coal in the N.E. part of the Island of Formosa.* By Lieut. GORDON, of H. M. brig Royalist. Communicated by the Admiralty.

[Read June 26, 1848.]

THE coal in the N.E. part of Formosa appears to extend in a direction east and west, and I have traced it through a succession of pits for a distance of 6 miles, from the village of "Kelung" or "Killon," due east.

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* See further on the Galapagos Islands, 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' vol. vi. p. 332; and on the plants and vegetation of the Galapagos Archipelago, refer to two papers by Dr. J. D. Hooker, in the 'Linnean Transactions,' vol. xx. pp. 163, 235.—ED.

About half a mile south of this, 50 feet above the level of the sea, I observed the westernmost coalpit in the west end of a range of hills running nearly east and west.

Proceeding east, along the south side of this range, at about two miles distance, I examined two pits, one on the east and the other on the west side of a southern projection of the range, 230 feet above the level of the sea, measured by the barometer.

Chinamen were employed digging the coal out at the further end with a sort of half pickaxe, and dragging it to the entrance on a sledge made out of a board.

The coal-seam was embedded between layers of soft blue claystone shale, between the layers of which iron was visible, but did not appear to abound. The sandstone of the neighbourhood was fine and of an ochreish colour. The surrounding soil was composed of a reddish and ochreous fine clay and sand; it was very rich, and, where not cultivated, was covered with high rank grass.

I ascended the hill over the pit, and was much struck with the appearance of the hills; the summits of all on this side rose abruptly to the north, and dipped with an inclined plane to the S.E. at an angle of about 25°. The sandstone, numerous cliffs of which presented themselves, also took the same direction as the coal, and the whole of the N.E. part of this island preserves the same features.

Proceeding east along the same range, about three-quarters of a mile from the last pit, we again met with the coal-seam, situated in a similar position, and about 50 feet higher than the last, and about 60 to 70 feet below the summit of the hill.

At this pit I agreed with the Chinamen to put on our vessel's decks 100 pecul, or 5 tons 19 cwt., for 8 dollars, or about 6*s*. per ton.

I again observed coal in an E. by N. direction from the above-mentioned pit, one mile distant. This was situated on the west side of a deep ravine running north and south, and probably terminating the range to the eastward. The coal appeared quite as good and as plentiful as at the pits already visited. The seam was 3 feet thick, and the height was about 300 feet above the sea. Iron appeared more abundant here.

Proceeding up the ravine I found in several places on the path-side coal projecting above the ground, and evidently the commencement of seams. The Chinamen conducted us to the opposite or east side of the ravine, and pointed out on the hill-side quantities of coal on the surface. The height above the level of the sea is 250 feet.

From the last-mentioned pit, in a S.S.W. direction 2½ miles, near the village of Cong Loo, coal was again observed at the head of a valley running to the S.E. about one mile from the sea and 300 feet above the level.

The valley here ran east and west, and appeared to terminate where we ascended to the coal. The hills in this valley did not here present the same features, but the northern faces of them sloped down and the tops were irregularly peaked.

About one mile to the N.E. of us rose a very remarkable peak, which I have named "Dome," and is one of the most prominent features of the coast.

During my observations I have seen nothing but sandstone, even in the beds of the rivers, and along the sea-shore quantities of coral. The luxuriance of the vegetation and richness of the soil are beyond anything I have hitherto seen, and the regularity of the hills throughout is very striking. There was, however, very little large timber, the greater portion of the hills being clothed with underwood.

No shelter presents itself from Dome Peak, east, until the N.E. point is nearly reached, when a small cove with a fishing village, runs in S.E., and nearly severs the N.E. point from the island. This is named by the Chinese, Petow, or Nose. All the rock in this neighbourhood is a fine blue sandstone, and dips at a small angle very regularly to the S.E.

Last year, before the existence of coal was known on this island, when running along the coast in lat. 22° 42′ N. and long. 121° 00′ E., we passed, about 2 or 3 miles from what appeared the entrance of the river, through several miles of a blackish water, apparently black with coal-dust.

The Chinese settlement, furthest south, on the east coast, is in 24° 37′ N. latitude, or 31 miles from the N.E. point. Just to the southward of this a chain of high mountains, rising perpendicularly from the sea and ascending to the height of about 10,000 feet, stretch to the S.W. and divide the Chinese part of the country from that inhabited by the aborigines: this range terminates at the south point of the island. The only port we could discover on the east coast was that of So-a-ou, but it is by no means safe.

To the westward of Kelung village I examined the country for upwards of 4 miles in a W., and then in a N.W. direction, following the bank of a mountain stream which fell into the west creek of Kelung. The features of the southern range of this valley resembled strikingly those of the range west of Kelung, and were even more regular, forming a succession of inclinations at about 15° to the S.E. and nearly perpendicular to the N.W. West of Kelung Harbour alongshore the coast presents the same regular and remarkable features for 5 miles, when a singular sandstone peninsula, rising perpendicularly from the sea, appears to terminate on the coast the regularity of the stratification.

The country had the same rich and beautiful appearance and seemed more thickly inhabited and better cultivated than to the eastward.*

VI.—*Successful Journey to the Karakorum Pass, in Central Asia.* By THOMAS THOMSON, M.D., Assistant-Surgeon on the Bengal Establishment, and Commissioner to Tibet. In Extracts from a letter from Kashmir.

[Read Jan. 22, 1849.]

"YOU know that my intention in proceeding to the northward from Le was to visit the highest part of the mountain range lying between Ladakh and Yarkand. My road was, therefore, that followed by the merchants who trade between these two countries, who are the only travellers on this route, Yarkand being subject to the Chinese government, whose system of seclusion is there in full force. Early in spring and late in autumn, the merchants, after crossing the mountain range to the N. of Le, follow the course of the Shayok river; but a great part of the course of this stream is deep and rocky, so that from June till October it cannot be forded, and hence during these months this route is impracticable, and another shorter but very mountainous road takes its place. I scarcely know how to explain this road without a map. It ascends what I have for convenience called the Nubra Valley, viz., that of a large tributary, which having been visited both by Moorcroft and Vigne, is laid down in the maps, and thence strikes across the mountains in a N.E. direction, till the Shayok is gained in the upper part of its course, above the unfordable part. In Vigne's map there is a fancy sketch of this route laid down in it, though it is made much farther from Nubra to the Shayok than it actually is."

"*Kashmir, October* 8, 1848.

"I have thus (as my last letter was written on the 7th of August) a journey of two months to give you an account of. This has been the most novel as well as the most interesting

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* The quality of the coal found at Formosa has been found good, having undergone an analytical examination at the Museum of Economic Geology; but the value of the discovery, in a commercial point of view, is diminished at present by the expense of freightage. Lieut. Gordon had it placed on board the Royalist for 6*s.* per ton, while the cost of delivery at Hong Kong would be 2*l.* per ton, and English coal at the same place sells for 1*l.* 8*s.*—ED.